

## TIME TO RETURN TO BALANCED BUDGETING

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### ***SAFE Commission Act Would Address Nation's Growing Budget Deficit***

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Our nation currently faces the largest federal budget deficits in its history. In the 1990s, we were able to achieve federal budget surpluses. It is time to return to the fiscally responsible policies of that era and impose fiscal discipline on federal government spending. A balanced federal budget can and must be achieved.

Toward that end, I am a cosponsor of the Securing America's Future Economy (SAFE) Commission Act, a bipartisan measure which would force Congress to make the hard choices needed to balance the federal budget.

The bill will create a national bipartisan panel to examine all areas of federal spending and tax policies and make broad based and comprehensive recommendations to Congress for reform. The measure then requires that Congress take up the Commission's recommendations expeditiously and approve or reject them as a whole. No amendments or negotiations would be in order.

Neither house of Congress could change the recommendations nor delay their consideration, and the bill requires Congress to give priority to the consideration of the recommendations over other congressional business.

Congress left to its own devices could balance the budget, but the process would be time consuming. Given the urgency of action, the Commission approach offers the best opportunity for restoring fiscal discipline in the near term.

The SAFE Commission is modeled after the Social Security Commission that made recommendations to Congress in 1983. Those recommendations were adopted by large majorities in both houses after brief debates. Our approach to military base closings following the fall of the Soviet Union also employs this procedure. Unlike the Social Security Commission and the base closing commission, the SAFE Act encompasses all areas of federal taxing and spending.

The SAFE Commission Act enjoys broad bipartisan support, and it is cosponsored by more than 100 Democrats and Republicans who all agree that it is time to change the nation's financial course. The SAFE Act will take a first necessary step toward achieving this goal, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure its enactment.

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